The Importance of Community: Finding Connection Through Gaming

Community NerdyBirdy Jan 13, 2022

Connection and community have always been an essential part of healthy living. As social animals, we're meant to seek out relationships with others. It's what makes us human and is necessary for us to build friendships, families, and societies. These associations not only fill out our life, they're also just plain good for us.

Strong social bonds have been correlated with a higher sense of self-esteem and empathy, and lower rates of anxiety and depression. Having positive relationships has even been shown to improve overall immune and digestive health. It's clear that finding, building, and maintaining social connections and relationships is a crucial cornerstone for a happy and healthy life.

However, socializing and strengthening ties has never been more difficult than during the last two years. The ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic not only brought severe medical and economic pain, but it also led to school closures, remote work, and the shrinking of the physical space for people to meet and interact.

Building Digital Communities

Fortunately, vibrant, and dynamic new communities have thrived in the digital space that's emerged across the globe over the last several years. For example, gaming groups and communities have grown and expanded as millions have bonded and developed strong and lasting relationships over their shared love of gaming.

Video games and gaming communities are now an important social space for millions of people. For millions of gamers, gaming is a way to interact and communicate with others, often in a fun and highly engaging way. When researchers at Stanford University analyzed thousands of messages sent during an online gaming session, they found that not only were messages three times more likely to be socio-emotionally based than task-based, but that the messages were more than twice as likely to be positive than negative.

Gaming can be an especially critical social space for anyone who considers themselves to be socially vulnerable. For instance, those with insecure attachment styles, social anxiety, autism spectrum disorders have mentioned how gaming has provided them with a “safe space” to interact socially on their own terms.

And during a crippling global pandemic, gaming has provided young people with the essential social spaces for them to develop the skills and confidence to make new friends and develop relationships.

The Duty of Xbox Ambassadors

However, although gaming communities can be incredibly beneficial to its members, there are still unfortunate events of bad actors and poor behavior. Some gamers report instances of trolling, bullying, and harassment on some gaming platforms and online communities. Any toxic behavior can have an incredibly detrimental impact on gaming communities overall, as well as on individual gamers.

The Xbox Ambassadors program was established to combat these toxic behaviors on the Xbox platform, as well as to encourage inclusivity and help build a safe and healthy community. As Xbox Ambassadors, we strive to make a positive impact within our gaming community by celebrating the unique capabilities of all, as well as promoting an environment based on safety, trust, and enrichment.

Ensuring that Everyone Can Find Community and Connection

Xbox Ambassadors know that gaming is better when everyone can play. That’s why at Xbox we emphasize inclusivity not only in our gameplay, such as with the Xbox Adaptive Controller or ease of access features such as high contrast or closed captioning, but also within our larger Xbox community.

The benefits of finding connection and community should be available to everyone. As Xbox Ambassadors we strive to make gaming fun for everyone and work each day to make gaming a better place.